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ABSTRACT

This paper was written to describe the essential tasks of a process known as Dependable Strengths Articulation (DSA) and how career development practitioners can acquire the skills to use the process. DSA, when combined with practices known as Job Magnet, helps participants identify their individual excellence and then use this knowledge to attract job offers. (GCP)

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Identifying Individual Excellence: The Dependable Strengths Articulation Process

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Chapter Five

Identifying Individual Excellence: The Dependable Strengths Articulation Process

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Introduction

This paper was written to describe the essential tasks of a process know as *Dependable Strengths Articulation (DSA)* and how career development practitioners can acquire the skills to use the process.

Dependable Strengths Articulation (DSA), when combined with practices known as *Job Magnet*, helps participants identify their individual excellence and then use this knowledge to attract job offers. These practices of DSA and Job Magnet are usually learned in workshops that take 18 hours to complete. It is essential that DSA takes place in workshops where participants can interact with each other in small groups, usually quads. By attending five-day training sessions, career development practitioners can gain the knowledge and skills needed to help others articulate their strengths.

Bernard Haldane developed the practices of DSA and Job Magnet during the second half of the 20th Century. The practices are now studied, evaluated, refined, demonstrated and taught by the Board members of the Center for Dependable Strengths (CDS) and others who have been certified by CDS.

Essential tasks of Dependable Strengths Articulation (DSA)

As a participant in DSA workshop, you will:

1. Remember, describe and prioritize several Good Experiences;
   A Good Experience (GE) is something (a) you feel you did well, (b) you enjoyed doing, and (c) you are proud of doing.
2. Articulate strengths with the help of others who listen to you describe your GEs;
   Working in a quad, you will take turns with other quad members when talking about GEs. When you are the "story teller," other members of the quad will identify strengths they thought you demonstrated in each GE.
3. Identify the patterns of your strengths and prioritize the strengths;
   Using a chart and other prioritizing methods, you will identify top

strengths that were demonstrated in more than two or three of your GEs.

4. Confirm the reliability and validity of strengths using a Reality Test;
   Strengths that pass the Reality Test can be thought of as Dependable Strengths.
5. Write a *Report on Your Effectiveness*; Include in your report a concise statement that includes most of your Dependable Strengths. Support that short description with evidence for the Dependable Strengths that you have reported.

Essential tasks in Job Magnet practices

1. Show your *Report on Your Effectiveness* to others in order to be remembered.
   After assuring the people you approach that you do not expect them to have a job, ask them for advice about whether or not the report will help you get a job.
2. Ask the people who have looked at your *Report on Your Effectiveness* if they will keep a copy and use it to refer you to others.
   Ask the people you approach if they know of any other people who might hear of a job that uses the strengths shown on your *Report*. Ask them if they would be willing to give your *Report* to someone who might have a job calling for your pattern of Dependable Strengths.
3. Continue to show your *Report* to as many people as you can, thereby increasing the likelihood that the Report will eventually get into the hands of people who might recognize and value your particular pattern of Dependable Strengths. These people will then activate the "magnet" that draws you to a job fitting your particular pattern of Dependable Strengths.

Background for DSA and Job Magnet practices

The following information about background is posted on the CDS webpage (CDS, 2003):

> The late Dr. Bernard Haldane founded Bernard Haldane Associates, Inc. in 1947 and now hundreds of professional counselors apply his systems in hundreds of major city offices worldwide. Though the company still bears his name, he was not connected to the company after he sold it.
>
> Dr. Haldane was the author of several books including *Career Satisfaction and Success, How to Make a Habit of Success, Young Adult Career Planning, and Job Power Now!* Also,

numerous articles about Dr. Haldane's work have appeared in *Newsweek, Harvard Business Review, Personnel* and other publications.

By 1977, Dr. Haldane moved to Seattle and began advising people in hundreds of churches, businesses, social services agencies and colleges. He helped laid-off Boeing employees with career counseling during the 1980s and 90s.

Through a culmination of experiences, and with the assistance of his wife, Dr. Jean Haldane, Bernard Haldane evolved the idea of marketing one's strengths and potential in everyday life with a focus on helping children and the poor build their self-esteem. This idea was the seed that blossomed into the Dependable Strengths Articulation Process, a process that has since spread worldwide.

A more complete description of the background of DSA and Job Magnet practices can be found in a special edition of the *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal* that is devoted to the work of Bernard Haldane. An article by Forster (in press) in that special edition focuses on the historical development of DSA and Job Magnet practices. Bernard Haldane authored or co-authored several books that describe key aspects of DSA and Job Magnet. Three of these books are listed in the references (Haldane 1960, 1996; Haldane & Haldane, 1997).

Results of research and evaluation of DSA and Job Magnet practices

Bernard Haldane was always conscientious about evaluating the effects of the practices he devised, implemented and taught to others. Participants in DSA workshops are routinely asked to rate the degreeto which they learned new things about themselves. Participants in five-day training workshops are asked questions such as: Did the training give you new ideas about how to help others find work? The results of these evaluations practically always demonstrate positive ratings using the *Very Much* descriptor. For example, results of evaluations of DSA workshops offered by the Center for Career Services at the University of Washington are described on the CDS website. A quote about evaluation results obtained from those workshops is shown below:

> Of the 400 evaluations that the Center has collected 94% of the participants felt that the seminar raised their self-confidence; 92% felt that they had an increased ability to get a job; 88% discovered overlooked talents or skills; and 94% had increased hope. (CDS, 2003)

Research on DSA effects has been conducted by faculty members and graduate students affiliated with the Dependable Strengths Project (DSP) in the College of Education at the University of Washington. The DSP,

which was initiated in 1987, has also provided the structure and support for the development of curricula and other training materials. For example, Huggins (1994) authored curricula now being used in elementary schools in various parts of the U.S.A. Some of the studies conducted by DSP-based researchers focused on changes in self-descriptions resulting from participation in DSA workshops. Forster (1991) found that post-workshop self-ratings on the *Adjective Check List (ACL)* were significantly higher than pre-workshop ratings on scales such as *Self-Confidence* and *Achievement*. Positive outcomes were also reported in two doctoral dissertations.

Training opportunities for facilitating the practices of DSA and Job Magnet

The Center for Dependable Strengths (CDS) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance individual potential through use of the Dependable Strengths Articulation Process with the widest variety of people and organizations - resulting in increased employability, self-esteem, teamwork, productivity, motivation, and greater career and life satisfaction (CDS, 2003).

The Board of Directors of CDS offers at least three five-day training workshops each year to prepare career development practitioners for facilitating DSA processes. Career development practitioners who have completed training in DSA facilitation skills can then help others articulate their Dependable Strengths and use these strengths to obtain satisfying jobs. The CDS offers several levels of certification to career development practitioners who want to use DSA and Job Magnet practices to help others gain career satisfaction and success.

The five-day training workshops were first offered in 1993 under the structure of the Dependable Strengths Project (DSP), which was mentioned above in the section on results of research. During the period of 1993 through 2002, twenty 5-day workshops were offered as Extension Division courses at the University of Washington campus. A team that consisted of Bernard Haldane, Jean Haldane, Allen Boivin-Brown and Jerald Forster led these workshops. With the passing of Bernard Haldane in July 2002, the structure of the organization and leadership has changed. In 2003, the workshops were managed by the Center for Dependable Strengths (CDS), and the leadership team continued without Bernard. Despite the obvious loss of Bernard Haldane, the basic structure and design of the five-day training sessions have continued without major change. The training continues to be held on the campus of the University of Washington.

The five-day training workshop is designed so that participants complete two separate phases. During Phase 1, participants complete the 18-hour

workshop wherein they articulate their Dependable Strengths and then use their *Report of My Effectiveness* as they go through the Job Magnet process. During Phase 2, the career development practitioners learn skills that help them facilitate DSA and Job Magnet practices for others. Trainees receive a manual (Boivin-Brown, 2001) and two participant-workbooks. Graduates of this training workshop become eligible for the second level of certification. As of November 2003, approximately 400 participants have completed this training and many are continuing to higher levels of certification.

Further information about CDS and training opportunities can be obtained from:

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c/o Highline Community College
MS-Omni / PO Box 98000
Des Moines, WA 98198-9800

Phone: 866.398.9474 (toll-free)
Fax: 206.870.5915
ds@highline.edu
www.dependablestrengths.org

Summary and Conclusions

Practices that use processes called Dependable Strengths Articulation (DSA) and Job Magnet help participants achieve career satisfaction and success. Bernard Haldane developed these practices over a period of fifty years and the practices are now studied, evaluated and taught by board members of the Center for Dependable Strengths (CDS) and practitioners who have been certified by CDS. Eighteen-to 20-hour Workshops are available for people who want to articulate their Dependable Strengths and use them in the Job Magnet process. Training workshops that last five days are also available for career development practitioners who want to use DSA and Job Magnet practices to help others improve their career satisfaction. Evaluations and research outcomes have shown that participants appreciate what they learn in DSA workshops and training sessions. There is little doubt that these practices facilitate career and life satisfaction, as well as career success.

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